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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 12, 2006

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## **Senator Hammerstrom introduces nation's first legislation requiring cervical cancer vaccination for school entry**

**Lansing ---** Michigan State Senator Beverly Hammerstrom, R-Temperance, introduced today the nation's first legislation to require all girls entering the sixth grade to receive a vaccination which would prevent the virus that causes cervical cancer.

Senate Bills 1416 and 1417 require a vaccine for the human papillomavirus (HPV) to be added to the immunization schedule for Michigan's schools and academies beginning next school year.

Sen. Hammerstrom's efforts come after the recent FDA approval of an HPV vaccine for girls and women aged 9 through 26. The federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended routine vaccination in girls aged 11 and 12 and, as appropriate, for the other approved age groups.

The vaccine has been shown in clinical trials to be 100 percent effective at preventing disease from the two types of HPV that are responsible for approximately 70 percent of all cervical cancers.

"Recent studies have shown that cervical cancer may be one of the few cancers that is actually *preventable*. This new vaccine will serve as our most effective tool in the fight against cervical cancer," said Sen. Hammerstrom, Chair of the Senate Health Policy Committee. "For the first time in history, we have an opportunity to finally eliminate this deadly disease."

Sen. Hammerstrom noted that as with all other school-required vaccines, parents may opt-out of this requirement for medical, religious or philosophical reasons.

The legislation received bipartisan support, including from all of the women in the Michigan Senate.

Sen. Hammerstrom's efforts stem from her participation in Women In Government's "Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer Campaign," which mobilizes state legislators to target cervical cancer eradication through education and policy. Since 2004, 45 states have introduced legislation or resolutions tackling this issue. Michigan, however, is the first state to require the vaccine for school entry.

Sen. Hammerstrom, who has served as President of the Board of Directors for WIG, was one of the first legislators to join the *Campaign*.

“I’m proud to have been a part of Women In Government’s nation-wide effort to educate our citizens about cervical cancer and the fact that it is one of the first cancers that is preventable,” said Sen. Hammerstrom. “Michigan has stepped up to the challenge and is poised to be a leader in the fight against cancer.”

She sponsored a resolution in 2004 urging the Governor to create a Cervical Cancer Task Force. The Michigan Task Force on Cervical Cancer Awareness was created by executive order in 2006.

Also today, Women In Government issued state policy recommendations for HPV vaccine implementation, developed by a bipartisan group of women state legislators, including Sen. Hammerstrom, who convened as part of an HPV and Cervical Cancer Task Force. The recommendations support school entrance requirements for the vaccine in conjunction with existing state exemption laws, as well as other initiatives to ensure widespread access to such preventive technologies for cervical cancer.

“With the HPV vaccine and new screening technologies like HPV testing, we are now on the threshold of an incredible era in which cervical cancer could be eliminated,” said Susan Crosby, president of Women In Government. “We must make sure that all women have access to such technologies so that no more women die needlessly of cervical cancer.”

### **About Cervical Cancer**

Worldwide, cervical cancer is the second leading cancer-killer of women, with almost a quarter-million deaths each year. In the United States, the American Cancer Society estimates 9,710 women will be diagnosed with and more than 3,700 women will die of cervical cancer in 2006. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 20 million people are currently infected with HPV, with 6.2 million new infections occurring annually and approximately 80 percent of sexually active women will be infected with HPV by age 50. For 90 percent of infected women, the virus is naturally cleared by the body and becomes undetectable within two years. However, persistent infection with “high-risk” types of HPV can cause cell changes that, untreated, can lead to cervical cancer.

### **About Women In Government**

Women In Government is a national, 501(c)(3), non-profit, bi-partisan organization of women state legislators providing leadership opportunities, networking, expert forums and educational resources to address and resolve complex public policy issues. For more information, visit [www.womeningovernment.org](http://www.womeningovernment.org).

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Editor’s note: A photo of Sen. Hammerstrom will be available later this afternoon for download on the Senate Majority Photowire at:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/Hammerstrom/Hammerstrom.htm>

Editor’s note: Audio of Sen. Hammerstrom will be available for download later this afternoon on the Senate Majority Audiowire at:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/hammerstrom/index.htm>